

asked to describe *Hangover Music Vol. VI* (Spitfire), the new acoustic-based album from his group, Black Label Society, Zakk Wylde does something entirely appropriate: he takes a long swig from a bottle of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and mulls over the question. "Put it this way," he finally answers. "With our last album, *The Blessed Hellride*, you could smell the booze when you listened to it. With *Hangover Music*, you'll swear you can see it pouring from the speakers. I think the next BLS album should come with a free six-pack of beer and just get it over with."

Zakk has often referred to *The Blessed Hellride* as an album for times when you want to raise hell. *Hangover Music*, as its title suggests, is the soundtrack for the following morning, when you want to chill out.

Then again, offers Zakk, "It's a road-trip album, too. It's definitely one of those records you put on if you're taking a long drive."

BLS' sixth release may be largely acoustic, but don't be fooled—it still rocks. The songwriting is top-notch, and the album's many mellow moments are nicely counterbalanced by heavy electric guitar-driven sections. Above all, the album offers plenty of the jaw-dropping lead playing that has been the Wylde man's calling card for the past 16 years, since he became Ozzy Osbourne's guitarist. "Crazy or High," the album's opening track, features a stunning solo, while

"Takillya (Estyabon)" is an astonishingly fast—even by Zakk's ridiculous standards—39-second burst of acoustic shred.

"You could say *Hangover Music* is Black Label's equivalent of Guns N' Roses' *Lies EP* or Alice in Chains' *Jar of Flies*," says Zakk. "As much as I love the heavy shit, when the likes of Zeppelin or Alice in Chains throw down on acoustic, it's awesome. I mean, *Jar of Flies* has some brilliant songs on it, and at the end of the day, that's what it's all about. It doesn't matter if you're playing a Les Paul through a wall of Marshalls or strumming an acoustic—if it's good, it's good."

Hangover Music may surprise listeners who are familiar only with Zakk's skull-crushing electric prowess. But consider this: Zakk released an acoustic-based album several years ago: 1996's critically acclaimed *Book of Shadows*. "That album had mostly real somber-type stuff, but this one's definitely heavier," he says. "And as far as the singing goes, I'm belting it out a lot more than I did on *Book of Shadows*. And there are some way heavier guitar parts on it as well as some screaming solos."

What *Hangover Music* makes abundantly clear is that, 16 years into his career, Zakk is still on top of his game. Which made us wonder: what are the driving forces and philosophies behind his playing prowess? Remember—Zakk was just 19 and had been playing guitar for less than five years when Ozzy Osbourne chose him as his guitarist; some two years later, he became a superstar when he was introduced to rock audiences on Ozzy's 1988 album, *No Rest for the Wicked*. It takes dedication and a tireless work ethic to achieve so much in so little time, and Zakk evidently has these qualities in spades to this day.

FIGURE 1

□ = downstroke V = upstroke

picking: □ V □ V □ V □ V sim.

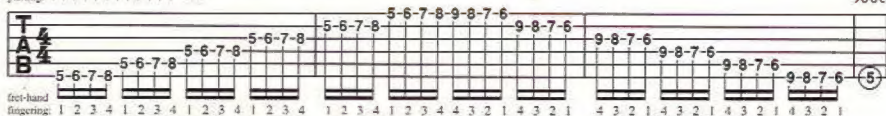


FIGURE 2

picking: □ V □ V □ V □ V sim.



FIGURE 3

picking: □ V □ V □ V □ V sim.

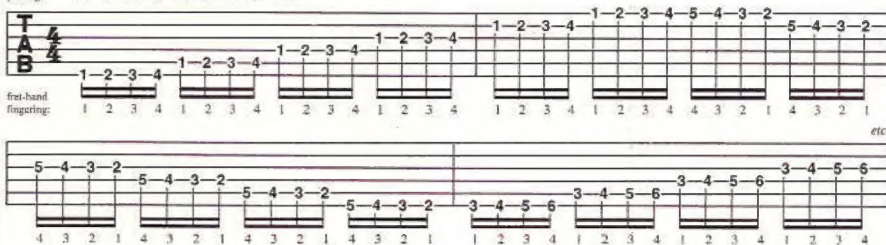


FIGURE 4 the five box shapes for the A minor pentatonic scale (A C D E G)

● = A root note

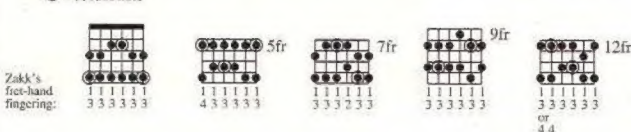
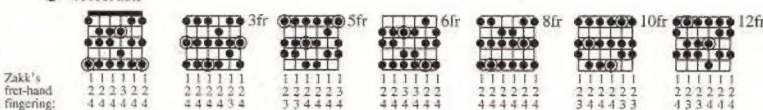


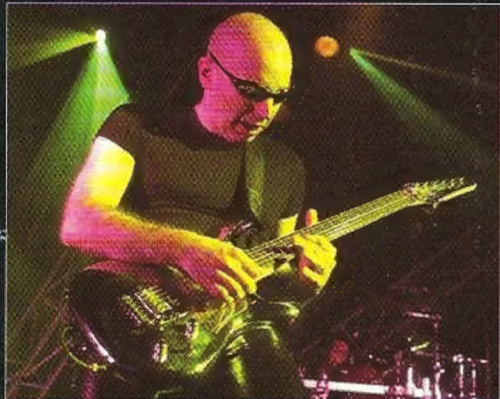
FIGURE 5 the seven box shapes for the A minor diatonic (Aeolian) scale (A B C D E F G)

● = A root note



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Practice Tips From: JOE SATRIANI



1) Don't spend more than an hour on any one thing.

The brain can only hold so much new information before it says "enough." Scientists have studied the changes that occur to the brain when a person learns something new. They've

found it takes a while for the brain to recover before it can process new information. So limit yourself to one hour a day on anything that is new or especially challenging.

2) Keep it fun.

This ties in with tip No. 1. Practicing isn't always

fun, but there are ways to lessen the boredom. When I was a kid, I'd get up and practice guitar for an hour before school, and during that hour I'd do all the boring stuff just to get it over with. That way I could come home, do my homework and then jam with my friends.

3) Find the note everywhere.

As an exercise, learn how to locate the note E everywhere, on every string. Once you've mastered that, go on to B, and then the other notes. Once you've demystified the placement of notes, you'll be amazed at how freely you'll be able to move about the neck.

4) Stay in tune.

When you practice, you're sending musical messages to your ears and your brain. Even if you don't realize you're out of tune, the brain does, and it sends a little message back: "This doesn't sound good. Stop practicing." So buy a tuner, use it and

stay in tune. You'll practice longer.

5) Run through every chord you know.

It seems silly, but if your fingers don't go to a certain place it's because you haven't challenged them. One day, when I was a teenager, I decided that I was going to learn every chord in a Joe Pass chord book I had. I worked on it every day; there's no substitute for bonehead repetition. The great thing is, once you get used to this exercise, you'll literally force your fingers to go from chord to chord—chords that have no relation to each other—and great things can come from that.

Recommended DVD: Tommy Emmanuel—Live at the Sheldon Concert Hall

Tommy Emmanuel is an Australian virtuoso acoustic guitarist, and he's beyond amazing. He leans on the positive side—it's all very "up" sounding—but he's well worth checking out.

Recommended Book: *Guitar Secrets* (Cherry Lane Music)

At the risk of appearing self-serving, I'm recommending my own book. I cover lots of ground here, from warm-up exercises to the mind-boggling stuff.

Recommended School: The National Guitar Workshop in Los Angeles

For years I avoided playing guitar clinics; I'm more of a one-on-one instructor. Once, however, we were trying to get into China to play some shows, and Ibanez thought we could break down a few doors by playing clinics. Lo and behold, I enjoyed them. I agreed to do a few more in the states, and my favorite one was at the National Guitar Workshop. Kids who attend it get to spend a week meeting with industry professionals. It was very loose and informal. I brought with me 10 CDs that I could play along to, and the kids were real close so they could see everything I was doing. We were able to talk and joke, and it was great.



Now, in this exclusive Berzerker Boot Camp lesson, Zakk tells the story behind his drive and rise to success, and demonstrates the exercises that help him remain one of the hardest-rocking guitarists of all time.

1) GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT

When I was a kid, I lived for football," says Zakk. "I was a linebacker, and I loved contact—I loved taking people out. I was so into it that at one point I wanted to go to Penn State because all the great linebackers usually come out of there."

"When I was around 11, I went to a football camp and I met the legendary [ex-Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker] Jack Lambert, who was a huge influence on me when I played ball. I idolized him. In fact, I still do because he's the real deal; he's totally devoid of bullshit. I remember him telling us something that remains with me to this day: 'Anybody can play football, but if you don't have passion for what you're doing, then get the hell out of here and go home, because I don't want you on my team.'"

"That's the bottom line right there—you don't go out there to get your brains bashed in with the intent of ending the season with a seven-and-nine record. Fuck that! You go out there with the intention of winning the Super Bowl or you shouldn't fuckin' bother. I have the same mentality with guitar: you either strive for greatness or you go home, 'cause you've gotta give all or nothing."

"I wanna be the very best at what I do, because I love it much. Because of that I'll try my damndest to live up to the likes of Randy Rhoads, Eddie Van Halen, Frank Marino, John McLaughlin—all the great guitar players I look up to."

So what caused Zakk to shift his focus from football to rock guitar? "I was a huge Black Sabbath and Ozzy fan, and I loved the stuff Tony Iommi and Randy Rhoads were doing on gui-

Practice Tips From: John Petrucci

1) Have a goal.

Say to yourself, "During this hour I'm going to master this passage." There's nothing wrong with noodling—it can actually produce some of the best ideas—but you'll get a lot more out of your practice time if you have an agenda.

2) Vary your practicing.

Don't get stuck in a rut. If you started yesterday's practice playing arpeggios, start today's with scales. Also, try to make a song out of what you're practicing to help break the tedium.

3) Use a metronome.

...or a drum machine or sequencer, if you have one. Whatever you use is fine; what's important is that you learn how to play in time.

4) Go easy (even when shredding).

It's all about training the tiny muscles in your hands. Start slow, relax and don't press hard. When you watch your favorite guitarists play, notice how little their hands and fingers move sometimes.

The economy of motion can't be overemphasized.

5) Record yourself.

After you've practiced for an hour or so, turn down the lights and record yourself playing. Improvise and go nuts, then playback what you've recorded and listen for your strengths and weaknesses. We record Dream Theater shows and I'll sit on the bus and listen to my playing—what worked, what didn't. A lot of times it's embarrassing and humbling, but that's what you have to do to get better.

Recommended DVD: Rock Discipline (Warner Music)

I originally put this out in 1996, and I think it's very appropriate for players of all levels. It includes segments on warming up, developing speed and accuracy, chromatic exercises—all the things you'd pay an instructor hundreds of dollars for.

Recommended School:

The Berklee College of Music
It's where I formed Dream Theater. The whole environ-



ment of the school is very inspiring. It's in Boston, which is a great town; everybody's walking around with a gig bag or a saxophone. For a musician, I can't think of a better atmosphere. Did I mention I formed Dream Theater there?

Recommended Book:

The Inner Game of Music, by Barry Green and W. Timothy Gallwey (Doubleday)

Gallwey coauthored another book, *The Inner Game of Tennis*. What's great about this book is how it helps to train your mind to look at music. It's not so much about actual playing as it is about concentration and expanding your senses. I can't recommend it enough.

2) BE DISCIPLINED

"You gotta have discipline, man," says Zakk. "The reason I love people like Jack Lambert and [six-time Mr. Olympian] Dorian Yates to death is the discipline it took for them to get where they got. Same for John McLaughlin and Yngwie Malmsteen. I mean, those guys just keep getting better, and regardless of what you think of their music, you've gotta give them props for that. If you want to be as good as they are, you need to be disciplined about practicing. For example, every morning I grab a guitar, sit down and get to work. There are days when I don't have as much time as I'd like, but there isn't a day that goes by that I don't pick up a guitar and practice."

"One thing I like to do is start off with chromatic exercises, picking each note and using alternate picking," says Zakk as he cranks out FIGURES 1 and 2 at a breakneck pace. "And, if I want a real good workout, I'll start both these at the first fret and take them all the way up the neck and then back down again," he says while playing FIGURE 3, a longer version of the pattern shown in FIGURE 1, to illustrate his point.

"Then I usually run through some pentatonic [five-note] and diatonic [seven-note] scale shit all over the neck. I think it's important that you get to know the five pentatonic scale patterns [FIGURE 4] and the seven diatonic scale patterns [FIGURE 5] back to front and inside out, so that you can rip through them fast and with total confidence. Together, they form the basic framework you need to be able to slam out killer leads."

"Sometimes, instead of just running up and down the scale shapes, I'll come up with finger-

Practice Tips From: Damageplan's Dimebag Darrell

1) Play trills.

Whenever I feel my chops are slacking, I'll play some wide-stretch trilling exercises and take them up and down the neck as well as across it. I'll start off with a two-fret stretch trill between my index and middle fingers and do that until I feel a burn. Then I'll do the same thing with a three-fret trill between my index and ring fingers, and then a four-fret one between my index and pinkie.

2) Run through scales.

Play the pentatonic blues scale, just for fret- and pick-hand dexterity and to mesh them both together.

3) Practice to records.

Learn licks and songs from records.

4) Play with yourself.

Set up a four-track or a jambox, lay down a rhythm track off the top of your head and then jam a solo over the playback.

5) Play from the heart.

Even though I'll do finger warm-ups that go up and down the neck to build up my chops and dexterity, I never, ever sit around and practice the actual licks I'm gonna play live. If you do then you'll be all worried about the complexity of getting the fingering right and everything else



about it, as opposed to the feel...and to me the feel overrides everything.

Recommended Book:

Riffer Madness by Dimebag Darrell (Warner Bros. Books)

I don't use books or videos, so the only one I can really recommend is my *Riffer Madness* book, not because it's mine but just because I know this one isn't a bullshit and that the techniques in it really do work.



ing patterns that make these scales sound more musical and less like finger exercises," Zakk says, playing **FIGURE 6** and **FIGURE 7** to illustrate. "There are lots of patterns and combinations of patterns you can come up with."

In addition to practicing scales and modes, Zakk works religiously on technique he's referred to in his popular monthly *Brewtality* column as "connecting the dots." It requires that you become familiar with these patterns and how to link them together, so that you can move seamlessly up and down the neck as well as across it. "Doing this is important because it opens up the whole fretboard," says Zakk, playing **FIGURES 8-10** to prove his point. **FIGURE 10** is an A minor pentatonic monster run that climbs the neck on the high E and B strings, then goes across it at the 17th fret before climbing back down on the low E and A strings.

"I find it's very beneficial to play these kinds of finger exercises along to the radio or your favorite records," says Zakk. "Doing that makes them sound more interesting and, more important, helps teach you how to apply these kinds of runs in real songs."

3) GO SLOW N' EASY

"As I've been told by all my mentors, do it slow and then work on it until you can play it

FIGURE 6 A minor pentatonic run

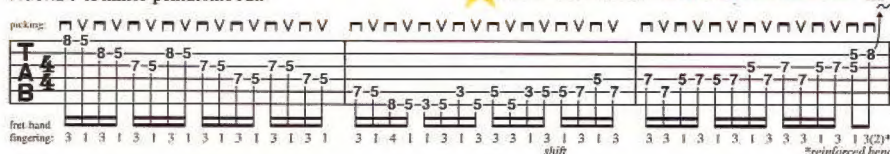


FIGURE 7 A minor diatonic run

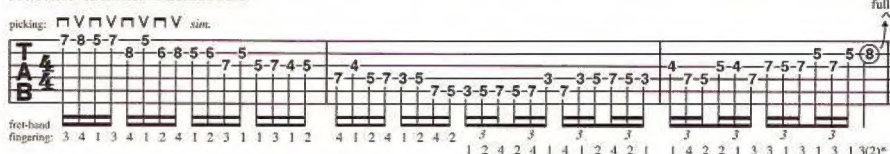
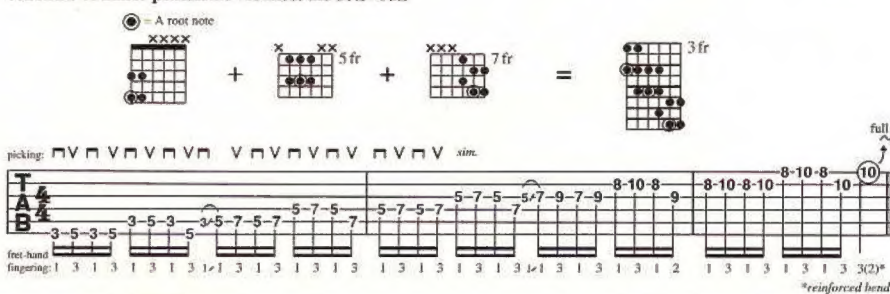


FIGURE 8 A minor pentatonic "connect the dots" run



faster. [Seattle Mariners third baseman] Scott Spiezio, a Black Label brother who's won a World Series ring and is one of the best baseball players out there, is one of the people who

told me this. When Scott was a kid, his dad, who was also a major leaguer, said, 'Son, if you can't hit a ball off a hitting-tee there's no way you're gonna hit a ball that's pitched to you.' So to this very day, when Scott's warming up, he still hits a ball off a tee, in order to totally focus on what he's got to do. The same principle applies to guitar playing—you've got to be able to do it slow before you can do it fast. A lot of the time I practice slow so I can zone in on the little nuances and work out the mechanics of playing something right."

4) CLOCK IT

"Want a killer practice tip? Get a metronome," says Zakk. "I still practice with one, and I always bring it with me on the road. In addition to helping you with your timing, a metronome lets you see how you're progressing when you're learning difficult shit. You start out with the metronome running slow, but as you get better, you can increase its speed. Doing that helps you keep track of how you're progressing."

Practice Tips From: Story of the Year's Ryan Phillips

1) Play both acoustic and electric.

Playing acoustic requires more finesse and makes your hands stronger, which will make you a better player.

2) Use less gain on your amp.

It's really easy to hide behind distortion, so use half the gain you'd normally use when practicing. You'll play a lot tighter.

3) Immerse yourself in all styles.

You can learn from all styles of music, even the ones you hate.

4) Play with passion.

Practice playing with emotion instead of just playing notes. If you genuinely love what you're playing, you'll sound good.

5) Practice songwriting.

A lot of great players are



working at Guitar Center stores, but if you want to make a living playing in a band you have to write good songs.

Recommended DVD: Pantera—3 Vulgar Videos from Hell

Simply the best music videos ever made. They may not teach you much about how to play, but they will teach you everything you need to know about going on the road.

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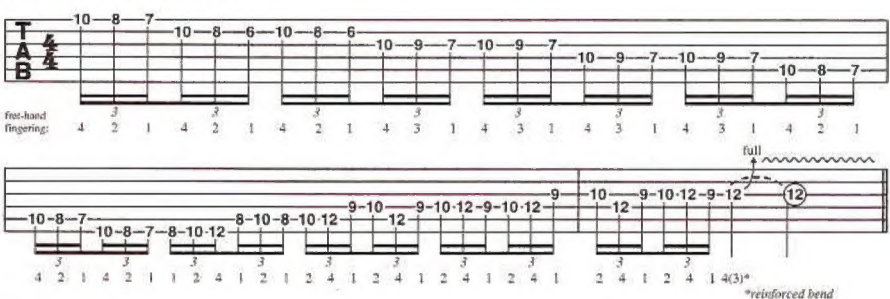


6) PRACTICE AT EVERY CHANCE

7) USE IT OR LOSE IT

"It's great finding weird, exotic scales that are challenging to play, and it's cool to learn them. But if you're going to sit down and practice something over and over, it makes sense to practice something that you might actually incorporate into your playing, instead of some insane shit you'll never use. [Martial arts actor] Bruce Lee once said, 'If it's not useable, then don't bother with it.' It's kinda like having junk pile up in your house—if you're not wearing those clothes anymore, then give 'em the hell away! I'd much rather put time into something like this [plays **FIGURE 12**] rather than some scale I'll never use."

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8) MAKE IT MUSICAL

"When I first started playing, a lot of my shit sounded like I was just running scales at a million miles an hour—because that's exactly what

Practice Tips From: Shadows Fall's Jon Donais

1) Warm up.

Run through all the modes and pentatonic scales in legato [i.e. using hammer-ons and pull-offs]. Be sure to change the key at times—and don't avoid the ones you never use.

2) Use alternate-picking.

Once your fret hand is ready, get your picking hand warmed up by picking every note as you fret it, using alternate picking. Start slowly and gradually build up speed. And use a metronome! I didn't practice with one for years and I regret it, because my instinct is always to play faster.

3) Read guitar magazines.

You can always learn something new from other players.

4) Jam with other guitarists' music.

I do this all the time, especially with DVDs, because you can see what they're doing. Even if you mess up a lot, jamming like this will often unearth new playing ideas that you would never have come up with otherwise.

5) Write your own material.

Unless you want to be in a cover band, always try to come up with your own material. You can practice all day long and be the best technical player in the world, but if you can't write a riff or a song you're pretty much screwed.

Recommended DVDs:

Anything by John Petrucci or Paul Gilbert—they're both great teachers.



I was doing! Then Dave DiPietro from [Eighties metal band] T.T. Quick, one of the greatest players I know, taught me about the blues. Dave was like the big brother I never had, and he taught me a lot. I can still remember him saying, "Zakk, slow down for a second and check this out." He'd play something like this [plays FIGURE 13], a real simple blues lick that sounded like music, not like a scale. That got me into incorporating slurs [hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides], bends and passing tones into my playing." Compare FIGURES 14 and 15 to see what Zakk means; FIGURE 14 sounds like a scale, while FIGURE 15 doesn't. And, as Zakk notes, "all you've done is change two notes."

"One of my biggest guitar influences is [Mahogany Rush guitarist] Frank Marino. Most of the stuff Frank does is based on the pentatonic box patterns [FIGURE 4], but he uses passing tones all the time. A passing tone is a note that would sound wrong if you stopped on it but sounds killer if you just touch on it on your way to another note." Zakk then demonstrates how the five moveable pentatonic box patterns can be packed with chromatic passing tones (FIGURE 16) and offers the B minor pentatonic-based lick depicted in FIGURE 17 as an example of how to use them. "Check out this E minor lick, too [plays FIGURE 18]. It's chromatic as all hell, but it sounds slamming because you don't stop on any of the passing tones."

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FIGURE 12 A minor pentatonic run

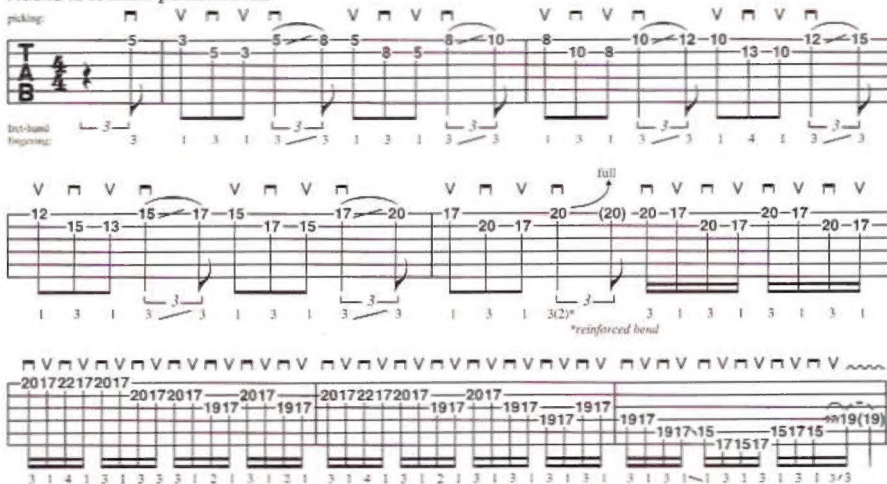


FIGURE 13 A minor Dave DiPietro lick

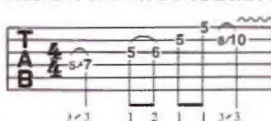


FIGURE 14 (A minor pentatonic)

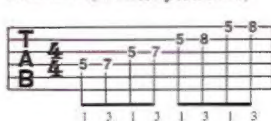
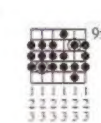
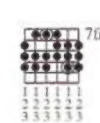
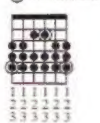


FIGURE 15



FIGURE 16 the five A minor pentatonic scale box patterns with passing tones added

● = A root note



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Practice Tips From: Yellowcard's Ben Harper

1) Keep a guitar within reach.

I bought a cheap guitar to keep on the bus while I'm on the road. The more often you see a guitar, the more you'll pick it up and practice. Instead of watching TV, practice guitar.



2) Play scales.

Learn the major, minor and pentatonic scales in every key. Practice your scales constantly, even when you're just having a conversation with somebody.

3) Learn to play by ear.

It's easy to find tablature for most of your favorite songs, but you'll gain more as a player if you figure out the songs on your own. Specifically, you'll train your ears to recognize pitches and the relationships between notes and chords, abilities that are invaluable to every musician.

4) Learn to play the piano.

The piano makes it easy to visualize scales and the relations between different notes in a chord. In this respect, it will help you understand music theory, which will in turn help you be a better guitar player.

5) Improvise frequently.

Have a friend play a basic I-IV-V blues progression and practice the appropriate relative pentatonic scale over the chord changes. It's a basic progression, but it will help you discover how the notes of the scale fit with the various chord changes within it.

Recommended Book:
Aaron Shearer—*Classic Guitar Technique, Vol. 1*

Mastering classical guitar can teach you everything you need to know about playing. This is a great book for learning how to play classical guitar. It's easy to read, and the series includes additional volumes that you can move on to as you progress.

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FIGURE 17 B minor pentatonic (B D E F# A) run with passing tones

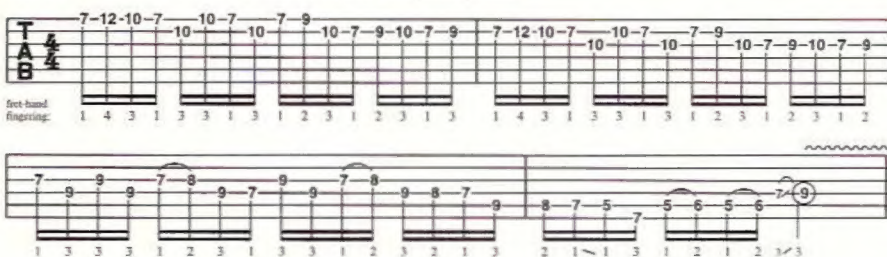


FIGURE 18 E minor pentatonic (E G A B D) run with passing tones

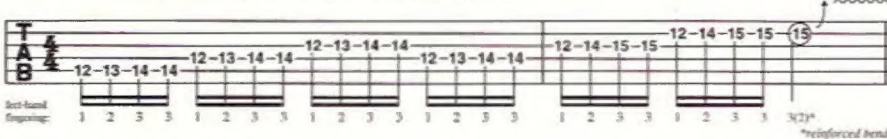


FIGURE 19 A minor pentatonic "chicken pickin'" lick

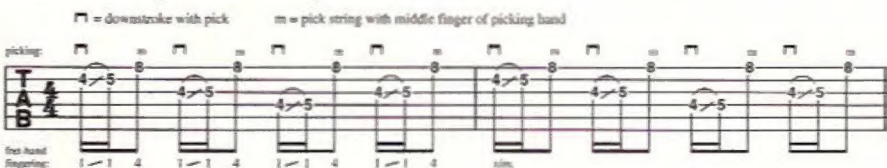


FIGURE 20 A minor pentatonic run played with chicken pickin'

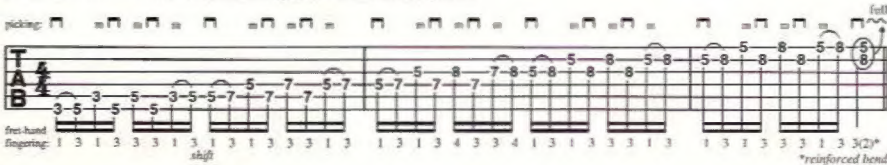


FIGURE 21 E minor lick with economy picking

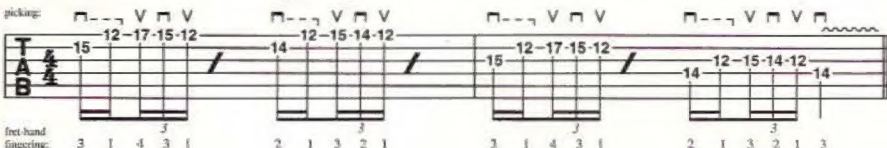
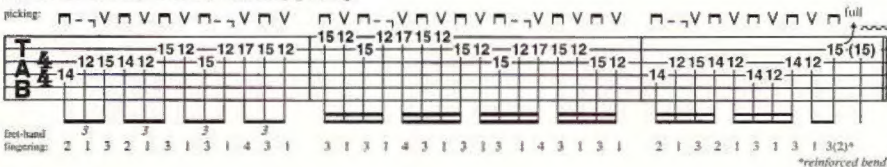


FIGURE 22 E minor lick with economy picking



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9) FOLLOW GREATNESS

"When I started playing, I was inspired to practice 24/7 by hearing guys like Al Di Meola, Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads, Gary Moore, Yngwie Malmsteen, John McLaughlin, Steve Morse, Dave DiPietro, Michael Schenker, Tony Iommi and Frank Marino. Hearing those guys still has that effect on me. You'll never know everything, so listen to greatness and get inspired. Sit down and copy some of your favorite players' shit; I still do that all the time. Also, check out country pickers like Albert Lee. His *Advanced Country Guitar* video is phenomenal, and I'd recommend that video to any rock player that's stuck in a rut. It's what got me into chicken

pickin'." This is a lead-playing technique in which you pick the strings with your bare fingers as well as with your pick (see photo, right). Says Zakk, "One of the cool things about this technique is that it makes string-skipping licks like this [plays **FIGURE 19**] easy to play. It can also help you haul ass on something like this [plays **FIGURE 20**]."

10) PLAY EFFICIENTLY

As regular *Brewtality* readers are aware, Zakk is a staunch advocate of alternate (down-up) picking, but only if it makes sense. The final two examples from our guest teacher, **FIGURES 21** and **22**, are in E minor and show how he employs *economy picking*, a technique in which a player uses consecutive downstrokes (or upstrokes)

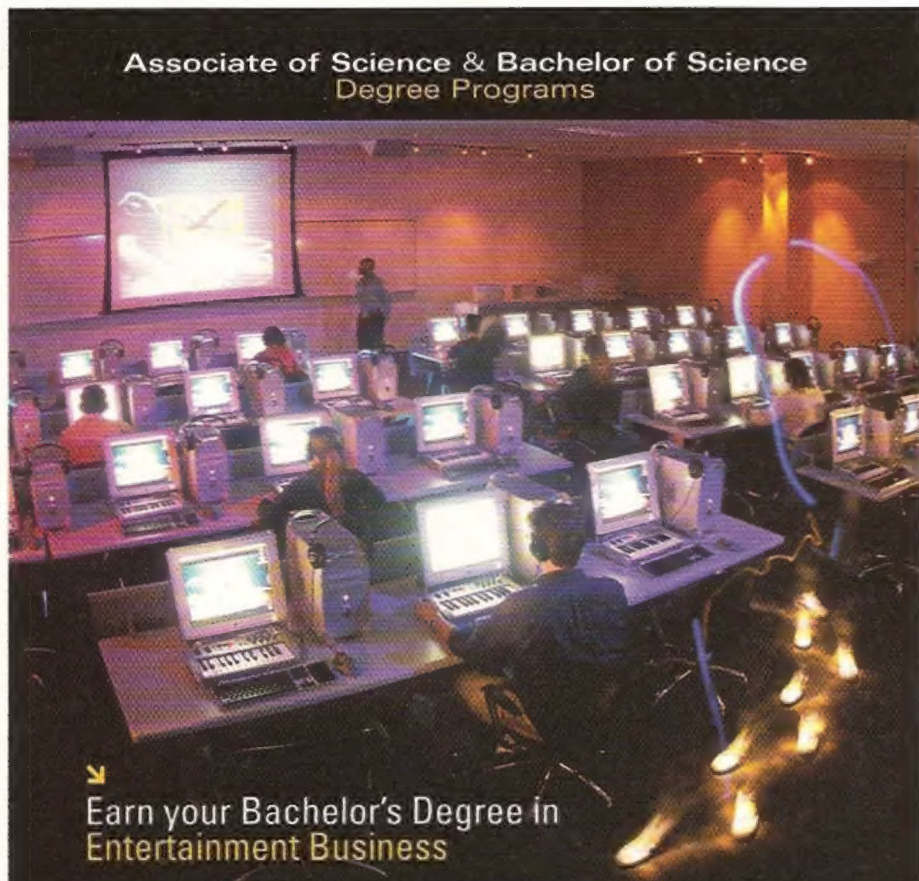


wherever and whenever it allows the least amount of physical movement. "Everything I do is geared for efficiency. If it doesn't make sense to do it, then I'm not going to bother." The picking strokes indicated above both figures tell the tale.

11) BE TRUE TO YOUR MUSIC

"There are some people that only want to be famous," says Zakk. "And then you've got the real musicians who love playing music. The ones who love their art will always last, while the pop stars that only care about being famous or getting a piece of ass will always fall by the wayside. For me, it's not about fame or money. I do what I do because I love making music—period. If I hadn't been lucky enough to land the Ozzy gig, I wouldn't be working a regular job; I'd be teaching guitar lessons and playing five nights a week in a cover band or something. If you commit yourself to music, it ain't a hobby. When music chooses you, you do it." ■

NICK BOWCOTT



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